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Terrorists Hit Twice in S. Viet Nam

(From Tribune Wire Service)

SAIGON, Viet Nam, Oct. 17 (Monday) — Terrorists struck on two fronts today, killing an American in a Saigon mine blast and attacking an American air base near the Cambodian border.

In the canals of the Mekong delta yesterday, armed American helicopters and navy patrol boats sank 121 sampans identified as Viet Cong smuggling craft and killed an estimate 66 guerrillas.

In Saigon, a home-made claymore mine spewed deadly pellets above the heads of a large crowd of Americans waiting at a military bus stop. The pellets ripped into a group of American service men leaving the Ky Son military billet, killing one and wounding seven others, three of them seriously.

Five Are Wounded

A Vietnamese woman carrying a pot of rice home for breakfast took the full force of the explosion and also was killed. Five other Vietnamese were wounded.

The mine—apparently fashioned from steel construction pipes and plastic explosive—was attached to a bicycle which the terrorist left leaning against a telephone pole. Had it been leaning at a more upright angle, the pellets would have hit the crowd near the bus stop.

The explosion occurred on Tran Hung Dao street, adjacent to the Metropole hotel billet which was hit in a Dec. 4 terrorist attack. That blast killed 10 persons, including an American, and injured 137 more, including 72 Americans.

Terrorist Makes Escape

The mine was placed midway between the Ky Son and Princeton billets. Another American billet, Hung Dao, is across the street. The terrorist escaped.

The explosives also shattered a Vietnamese home, breaking all the windows and wrecking the plaster walls.

At the American Phan Hang air base 165 miles east-northeast of Saigon, a terrorist ran to the edge of a pumping station under cover of darkness and heaved explosives over the fence. The blasts damaged two pumping engines. This terrorist also escaped.

The Mekong delta swoop, west-southwest of Saigon came after a fleet of 150 to 200 sampans were located by United States navy patrol boats. The naval craft charged in, blazing away with machine guns, and the armed choppers joined

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TERRORISTS STRIKE ON 2 VIET FRONTS

Cong Blast GIs in Saigon, Air Base

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them. They destroyed 121 of the sampans.

At last count, they killed 15 Viet Cong by body count and another 51 guerrillas whose bodies fell into the water and were not immediately recovered.

South Vietnamese troops swarmed in and seized 90 weapons, 45 hand grenades, mortar gear, medical supplies and 20 pounds of documents.

American gunfire set off two large explosions, one sending a ball of smoke 1,000 feet in the air.

The American and South Vietnamese forces did not report a single casualty in the engagement.

Bivouac Areas Bombed

South Vietnamese authorities, meanwhile, reported that two terrorists on a motorcycle hurled a Russian-made grenade at a group of policemen in the suburbs of Saigon Saturday, killing one and injuring another policeman, a soldier and three civilians. They said a third policeman ran after the motorbike, but was ambushed by another terrorist who shot him dead.

In the air war, American B-32s yesterday bombed suspected assembly and bivouac areas of infiltrating North Vietnamese troops seven and a half miles south of the demilitarized zone.

Another flight bombed suspected North Vietnamese troop concentrations 27 miles northwest of Pleiku in the central highlands near the Cambodian border. Both raids were aimed at thwarting a large Red buildup for a possible offensive.

U.S. Planes Collide

Two United States propeller-driven reconnaissance planes collided in the air 35 miles south of Saigon. A crewman on one plane was killed and the other flyer aboard was reported missing. The two-man crew of the other plane managed to fly it safely to Vung Tau on the coast.

In ground action near Da Nang, a United States marine battalion leap-frogged thru a heavily mined area and sprang a trap, led by Lt. Col. E. A. Walker, 43, of Cloverdale, Ind., that netted 22 Viet Cong dead and five captives. The captives included three females who re-

portedly ran a village Viet Cong women's association.

The marines marched along a road near a Viet Cong dominated hamlet, as if the men were returning to their base camp after a three-day operation. Then the marines surrounded the village five miles southeast of Da Nang.

Red Breakthrus Fail

The Viet Cong attempted to break thru the marine lines several times during the night, but failed. Walker said one platoon of marines killed 14 Viet Cong who were attempting to escape.

"We worked a little ruse and surrounded them," said Walker. "We hit them before they knew what had happened."

Artillery and tactical air strikes also were called in. "The artillery and air strikes were amazingly precise," said Walker. "They hit 150 yards or 200 yards from our lines."

Marine casualties were reported as extremely light.